October 1, 1979

Dear Bruce:

I have dipped into Tony's manuscript, given most of it a quick perusal and parts of it a deeper reading. I feel it's the most impressive collation of information onthe Kennedy assassination I have read. As far as my own knowledge is concerned, I think it's amazingly accurate in detail. I also found that his analyses and conclusions involving those areas of the investigation in which I personally took a part to be on target. I have only a very few gratuitous critical comments which don't weigh for much in light of my overall very favorable reaction to the job Tony has done.

For instance, I raise the quesion of whether or not there is "too much" information and detail, especially in relation to the plethora of names related to the mob and Hoffa's activities, only in relation to my feeling that the public views the Kennedy assassination field as already "too confusing."

My feeling that the book is perhaps a bit over-weighted toward the role of organized crime is connter-balanced by the realization that the Committee Report is also. But that's my perspective. I found Tony's preface excellent and, related to the above, was pleased that he pointed out -- although I wish he had done so more extensively throughout -- the basic incongruity of the Committee's position concerning, on the one hand, Oswald's "political" motivation and, on the other, his right-wing Mafia "involvement."

Like the Committee Report, I feel the book strains in its collation of detail in an attempt to link Oswald to the Mafia. Despite contentions to the contrary, Uncle Charlie was a low-level numbers writer.

Here are some comments with reference to specific page numbers:

Fonzi

my 4A. 21: I'm fairly certain (but not sure and can check if you'd like) that the staff researcher who discovered the CIA man had handled the autopsy photos was a she and not a he.

Hoch

my 10 27: The reference to the "hostile newspaper," left unexplained, strikes me as an unnecessarily hanging description.

my 19 36: In reference to the bullet fragments in the car and taken from Connelly's wrist, as well as to so much of the other evidence obtained from the National Archives: The incredibly unsecure environment in which that evidence was kept over the years -- althe painfully obvious to the Committee, it did no special sub-study of that -- taints, I feel, any objective analytical conclusions concerning that evidence. I wish Tony would have made much of th

YES - ADD

My 165

156+. This gets to my feelings about the contradictory element in a point of Tony's later conclusions. In lieu of the CIA's prevarication and deceit concerning its relationship with Oswald -- most specifically, Helm's lying -- it seems waffling to advance the contention that the assassination involved a possible "renegade" element of the CIA. (In the case of the Castro assassination plots, wouldn't it then follow that it was CIA Director McCone himself, as one of the few in the top echelon who didn't know about them, who could have been termed the "renegade"?)

where is this established?

Jerry Patrick

Hemming's not credible

My 266 284. It bothers me that Hemming's quote heads the chapter. I find it acceptable, butonnly flinchingly so, that Hemming's story regarding his encounter with Oswald in California be accepted on face value, but that may be one of Hemming's more plausible stories. He has a wide reputation -- and I have confirmed it -- as a promulgator of disinformation and to give him the status of a top-of-chapter guru does not enhance, I feel, the book's validity. Granted, that may be too provincial a viewpoint.

Change [illegible] Lorian [illegible]

true my 272 290. I believe JM/WAVE was not the name of a program but that of the Miami station itself.

Changes according

my 277 297. My understanding of Operation 40 was that it was an operation concurrent with the Bay of Pigs -- with an assassination capability and, perhaps, primary mission -- and that it did not survive afterwards.

(Drop Op 40 " "

true my 279 299. Re:."the Cuban Revolutionary Council...created two years earlier by the CIA in the shape of Howard Hunt..." There may be some confusion here. It was the CRC's predecessor, the Frente Revolucionario Democratico (FRD), created as the political wing of Bay of Pigs operations, which had the direct Hunt connection. Hunt resigned his political liaison post prior to the Bay of Pigs. I'm sure Hunt was very much in touch with the CRC, but, strictly speaking, it was the FRD which can be said to have been "created in Hunt's shape."

(Smond)

my 367 405. As a point of information which may be interest Tony: Cubela's contention is backed by Manolo Ray, whose information came from a third party source.

my 368 406. The reference to me is inaccurate. I was an investigator for Senator Schweiker, not his Committee or Subcommittee.

my 376 418. Interesting re William Gauden's reference to Arcacha Smith. Althoug Archcha was interviewed by the Committee, it was a perfunctory interview done on a moment's notice by myself because his lawyer successfully managed to finagle the Committee out of forcing Arcacha to answer its subpoena for a formal and extensive deposition in Washington. His testimony remains unsworn.

ADD?

my 459 519. Hunt, I'm sure, could be termed a "propaganda expert," but his official position was as the CIA political liaison with the Cuban groups. (Amend)

Sturgis claims that he was, for a short time, the overseer of all gambling operations for Castro before Fidel closed them. Calling him an inspector at the Tropicana is a bit misleading. (Amend)

my 459 520. Although Castro claimed Martino was arrested for flying into Cuba on a private plane, the evidence indicates he was actually flying commercial airline. His son was with him but was released almost immediately. (Amend)

my 524 597. Phillips was first head of covert operations and then Cuban operations in Mexico City, not both at the same time. A fine point only in theory. (Amend)

my 525A 599. No Committee inquiries were made of the Belgian authorities re the name of Frigault. The only checking done in that area, and not as deep as it could have been, was by Senator Schweiker's staff. (Amend)

Aftermath: I found the listing technique led to an intermingling of associations and information which produced a scattergun-like confusion, but I appreciated the effort at the point.

Again, what bothers me the most is the contention of a "regegade" element, which I find a weak thesis in view of the book's awesomely effective compilation of evidence against it. I perhaps would have found it more acceptable if it were presented in a "some contend"-way, followed by a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons, but, as it stands, I feel it weakens a bit so much of what is so strong in the book. On the other hand, pragmatically, I'll buy anything it takes to crack open the slightest fissure in the wall before the truth.

Drop "renegade"

It can be argued at least as reasonably, if not more so, that renegades are more likely than this institution

I wish Tony would have gone on more with his comments regarding the press' attitude toward the assassination. What he did was done so well.

Again, I am awed and impressed by the depth of Tony's work. He has my admiration; please pass on my congratulations.

Regards,

Gaeton Fonzi